

Module II: Consumer perception and preferences



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Module Description

This module will be organized in two parts that are stages in a sequence for developing communication campaigns with the aim of increasing consumer awareness about sustainable aquaculture in Europe.

The **first stage** will focus on how we can extract information from an experiment with consumers in order to identify the consumer perception and preference towards information regarding sustainable aquaculture in Europe. This type of information experiments can be used in various ways and an example on social media communication will be used to exemplify how this can be done in a concrete way.

The **second stage** will focus on how the result from an experiment can be applied in the design and development of guidelines for social media communication campaign about the topic of sustainable aquaculture in Europe. The aim of the campaign guidelines is to increase awareness and the course will show how such a strategy can look as an end point output.

Learning objectives

At the completion of this module participants will be able to:



1.

Understand how consumers respond to information about sustainable aquaculture production methods in Europe

2.

Apply knowledge on consumer reactions to practical guidelines for a marketing communication campaign

Module Outlines

1	Introduction/background	Knowledge gaps
2	Key concepts	
3	Stage I	<p>3.1. <i>introduction</i>: information experiments</p> <p>3.2. experimental survey</p> <p>3.3. results of the experiment</p>
4	Stage II	<p>4.1. introduction: application of the results in the development of guidelines</p> <p>4.2. aim and sources of information</p> <p>4.3. recommendations</p> <p>4.3.1 General social media communication strategy</p> <p>4.3.2 Social media communication strategy</p> <p>4.3.3 Action plan for a communication strategy</p>
5	Communication strategy	for increased consumer awareness about aquaculture in Europe
6	Glossary and Linkography (Videos)	
7	References	

Knowledge gaps

- ❑ There is a rather low consumer awareness about aquaculture and the specific production system practices. The definition of how low this awareness is and the reasons behind it will benefit the design of a strategic increase of awareness about aquaculture.
- ❑ Informed consumers could be more positive towards the benefits of new and sustainable production approaches, without being misled by the scepticism that naturally follows confrontation with unknown technological advantages in food production.

Key concepts

For the development of an effective communication campaign to raise awareness on sustainable agriculture it is important to:

- ☐ **Identify the preferences and the perception** of consumers on information regarding sustainable agriculture in Europe, which can be done through information experiments, e.g., on social media, to be designed to fit the goals of the campaign
- ☐ **Use the information** from the experiments to develop constructive **guidelines** for the communication campaign.

1 - Stage I

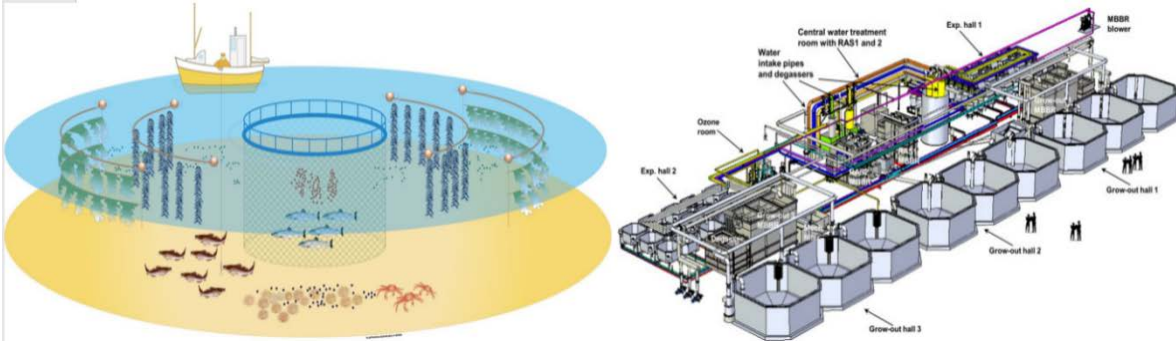
To extract information on how consumers respond to information regarding sustainable aquaculture in Europe, we can develop experiments. This type of **information experiments** can be designed to fit the goals of the campaign.

Considering that previous literature and campaigns indicated that general campaign strategies have little effect, an example on **social media communication** will be used to show how this can be done in a concrete way.

The following slide shows the information and image options that were presented to the consumers. Parts of the text is marked with yellow to show which parts were different between the options.

The combinations included the option of the various texts alone, as well as the text options plus the images that accompany each text.

Experimental survey: presentation



Factual:

Sustainable aquaculture in Europe is growing in full control of new feed sources and water quality to deliver high quality fish

#EUaquaculture #futureEUaqua #sustainability

Control/balanced:

Sustainable aquaculture in Europe is growing with focus on new feed sources, water quality, fish quality and welfare

#EUaquaculture
#futureEUaqua #sustainability

Emotional:

Sustainable aquaculture in Europe is making sure that we and our children can enjoy tasty and healthy fish in the future

#EUaquaculture
#futureEUaqua #sustainability

Experimental survey: results

The following slides present the **results of the experiment**.

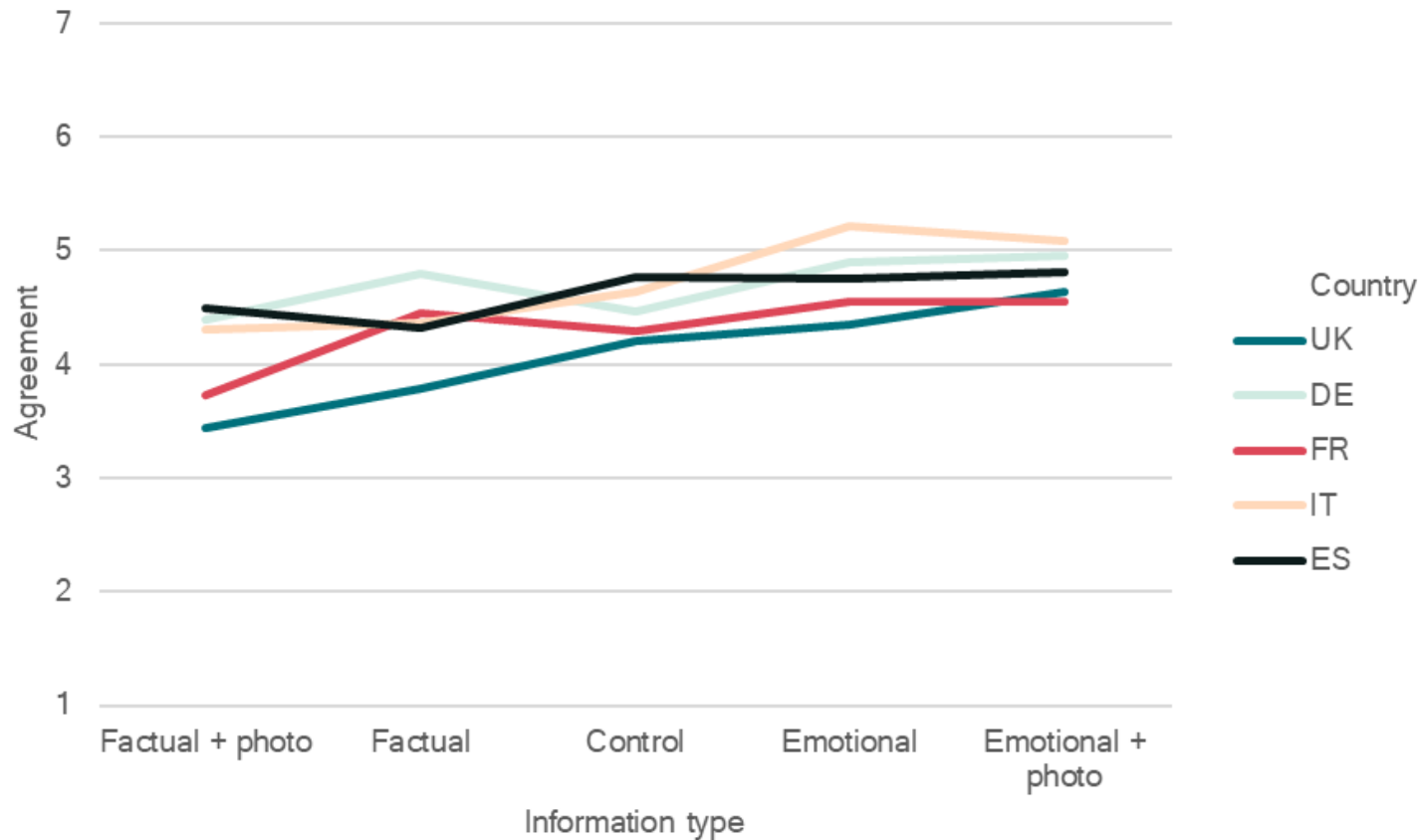
Three comparisons are shown:

1. countries
2. genders
3. age groups

The main result is that **emotional** content, preferably with a picture is the one that produces the highest liking scores.

Experimental survey: results

(1) Countries



- ☐ Europe:
 - UK
 - France
 - Germany
 - Spain
 - Italy

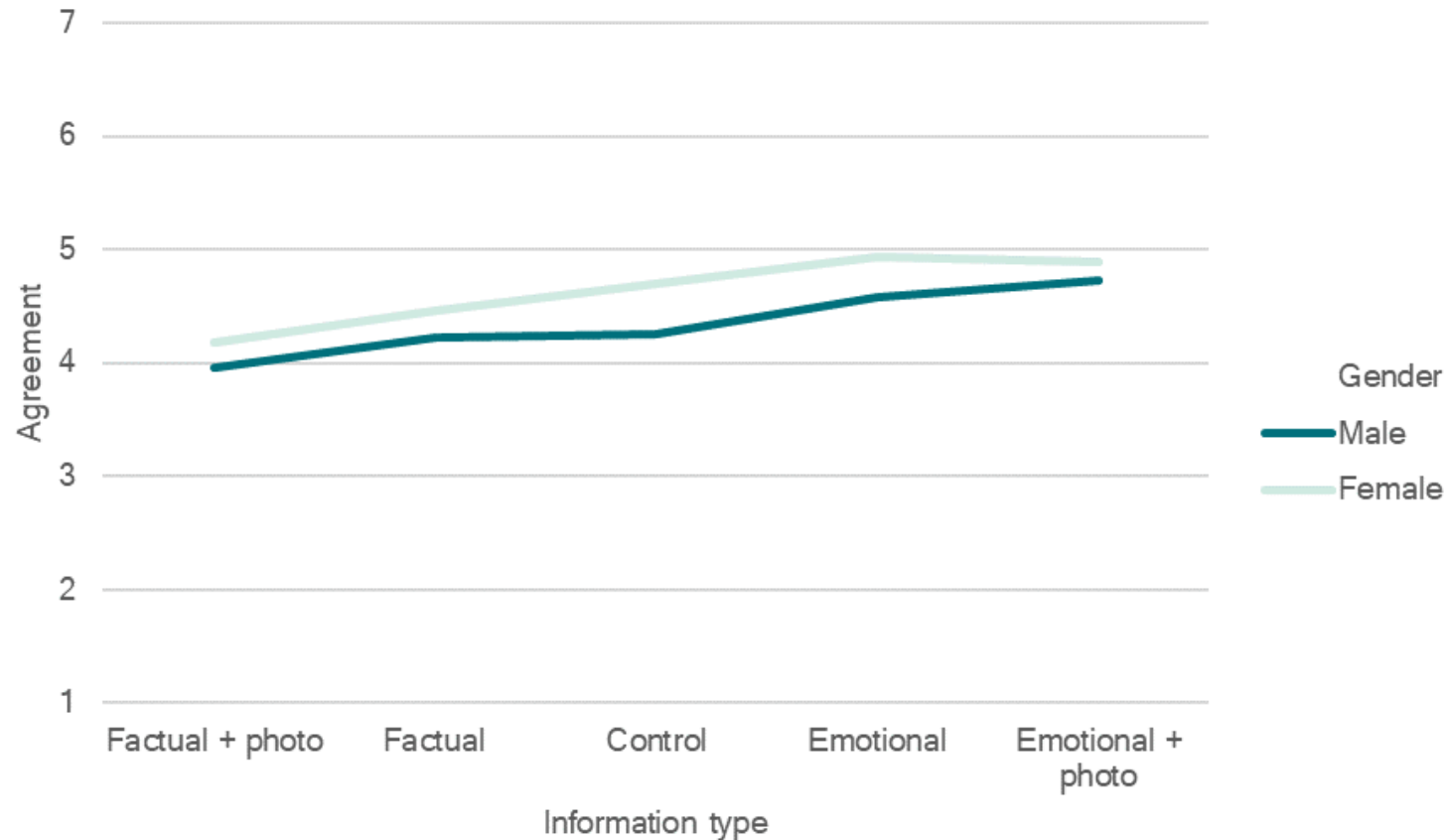
☐ 2,500 consumers

☐ 500 participants
from each country

Country differences for liking of the five social media posts

Experimental survey: results

(1) Genders



- ☐ Europe:
 - UK
 - France
 - Germany
 - Spain
 - Italy

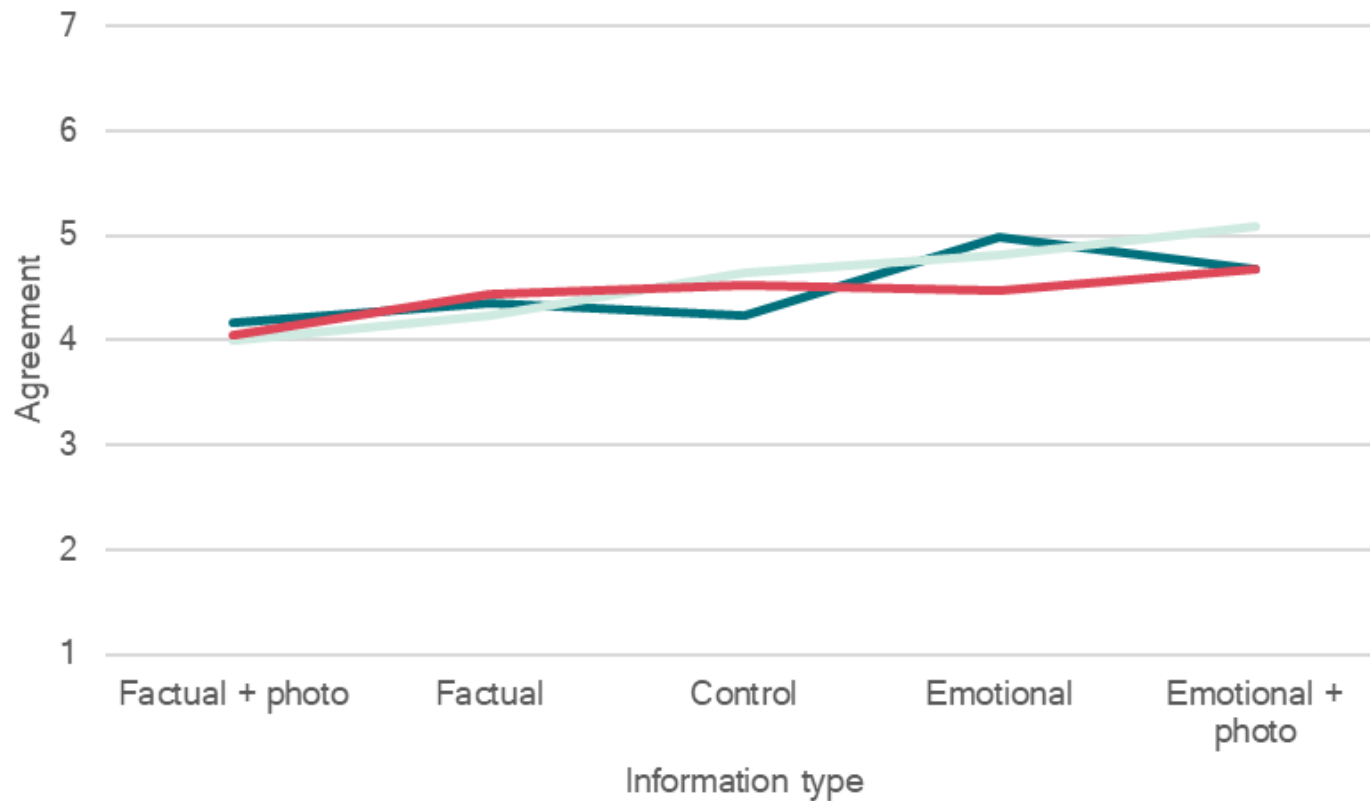
☐ 2,500 consumers

☐ 500 participants
from each country

Gender differences for liking of the five social media posts

Experimental survey: results

(1) Age



□ Europe:

- UK
- France
- Germany
- Spain
- Italy

□ 2,500 consumers


□ 500 participants
from each country

Age differences for liking of the five social media posts

Experimental survey: EXAMPLE OF HOW TO DESIGN IT

This video gives insights into experimental designs by describing and evaluating **3 blueprints for designing experiments** (repeated measures, independent groups and matched pairs)

Experimental Designs



- 1 Repeated Measures
- 2 Independent Groups
- 3 Matched Pairs

Experimental Designs



2 - Stage II

The following slides present how the result from the experiment can be **applied in the design and development of guidelines** for social media communication campaign about the topic of sustainable aquaculture in Europe.

We first describe the **sources of information** used in this process and then we move into the **guidelines developed**.

The final slide shows one page that can function as the summary of the communication strategy recommendations.

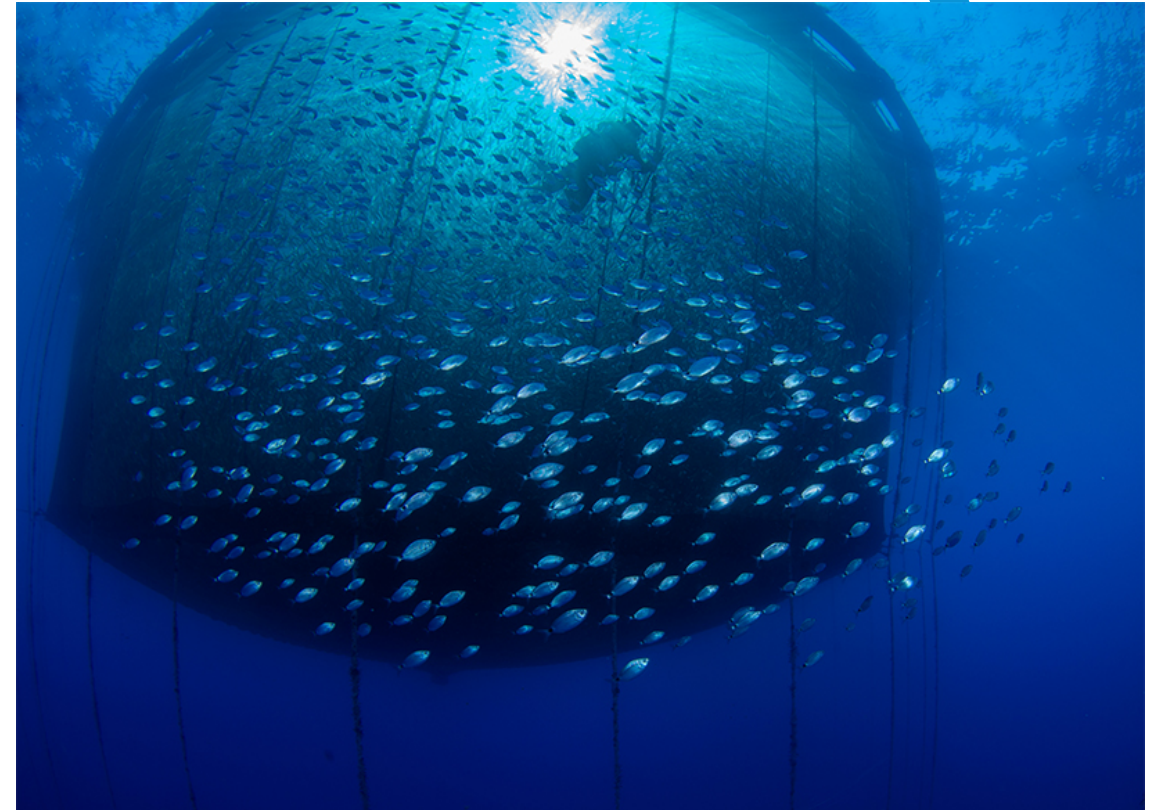
Recommendations

The main aim of this communication strategy:

Increase consumer awareness, perception and acceptance of European aquaculture.

Recommendations based on:

- Scientific **literature**
- **Evaluations** of the effectiveness of previous and current communication **campaigns**
- **Consumer survey** (FutureEUAqua D3.1) results
- **Experimental testing** of the types of social media messages that are preferred by consumers (Stage I)



Recommendations



General social media communication strategy targeting consumers:

- ❖ Consumer survey (FutureEUAqua D3.1) & project OrAqua → raise awareness through a communication campaign
- ❖ Previous campaigns →
 - Avoid a general approach to aquaculture and sustainability
 - Begin by providing general information
 - then adding more specific details on production systems (e.g. organic) and effects on the environment (e.g. carbon footprint).
- ❖ Stimulate consumers' **emotions** → maximise the possibility to understand, like, and sympathise with the message
- ❖ Add matching image → **amplify** consumers' emotions

Recommendations

General social media communication strategy targeting consumers:

- UK and France (FutureEUAqua D3.1) are the most **sceptical**
- Italian and Spanish most **positive**
- German liked **factual** posts without an image more than participants from other countries, yet, their highest liking was for **emotional** posts.

⇒ Emotional messaging should be used

- **Female** consumers more positive → target them as influencers.
- **Younger** participants less positive about pictures with emotional messages → target without pictures as part of the campaign.
- Willingness to repost generally low → **motivate** people to repost



Recommendations

General social media communication strategy targeting consumers:



- **Facebook** most frequently used
- Campaign focus on Instagram and Twitter, + **repost/forward** Facebook
- Younger consumers through **Instagram**
- 35- to 55-year-old through **Twitter**
- Three social media platforms are used by all → no extreme differentiations



Emotional messaging **liked** because:

- Simple and informative
- Pleasant colours
- Pictures of food
- Nice and tasty looking fish

Factual messaging **disliked** because:

- Complicated
- Confusing
- Overly detailed
- Unclear
- Cluttered
- Difficult to interpret

Recommendations

General social media communication strategy targeting consumers:

- **Economic benefits** of aquaculture for local communities → challenging but positive
- Animal and fish welfare, Environmental pollution, **sensitive issues** → should be avoided
- Familiar & specific environmental issues (e.g. CO2 footprint) → **effective** (EUMOFA 2017).



Recommendations

Social media communication strategy targeting specific groups:

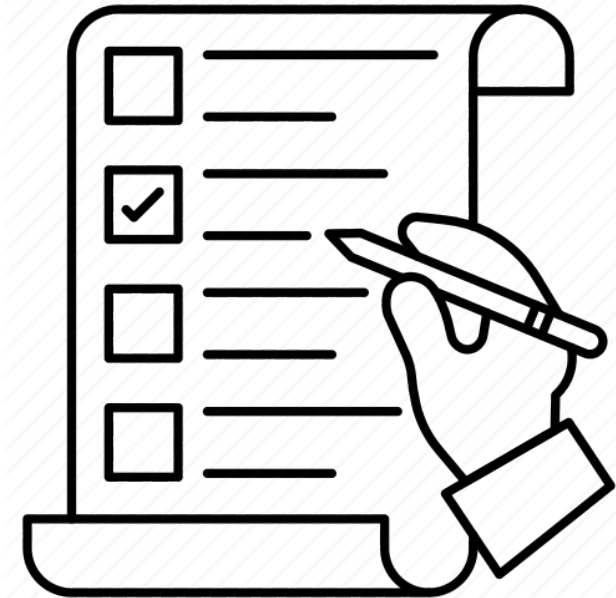
- **Policy makers** → tweets, more technical language.
Carefully directed towards a specific group.
- **Young adults and teenagers** → no reference to children.
Focus on protection of nature for everyone
- The **industry** → labelling advice from FutureEUaqua D3.2
- Visual elements (e.g. **emoji**) added to increase effectiveness per target group



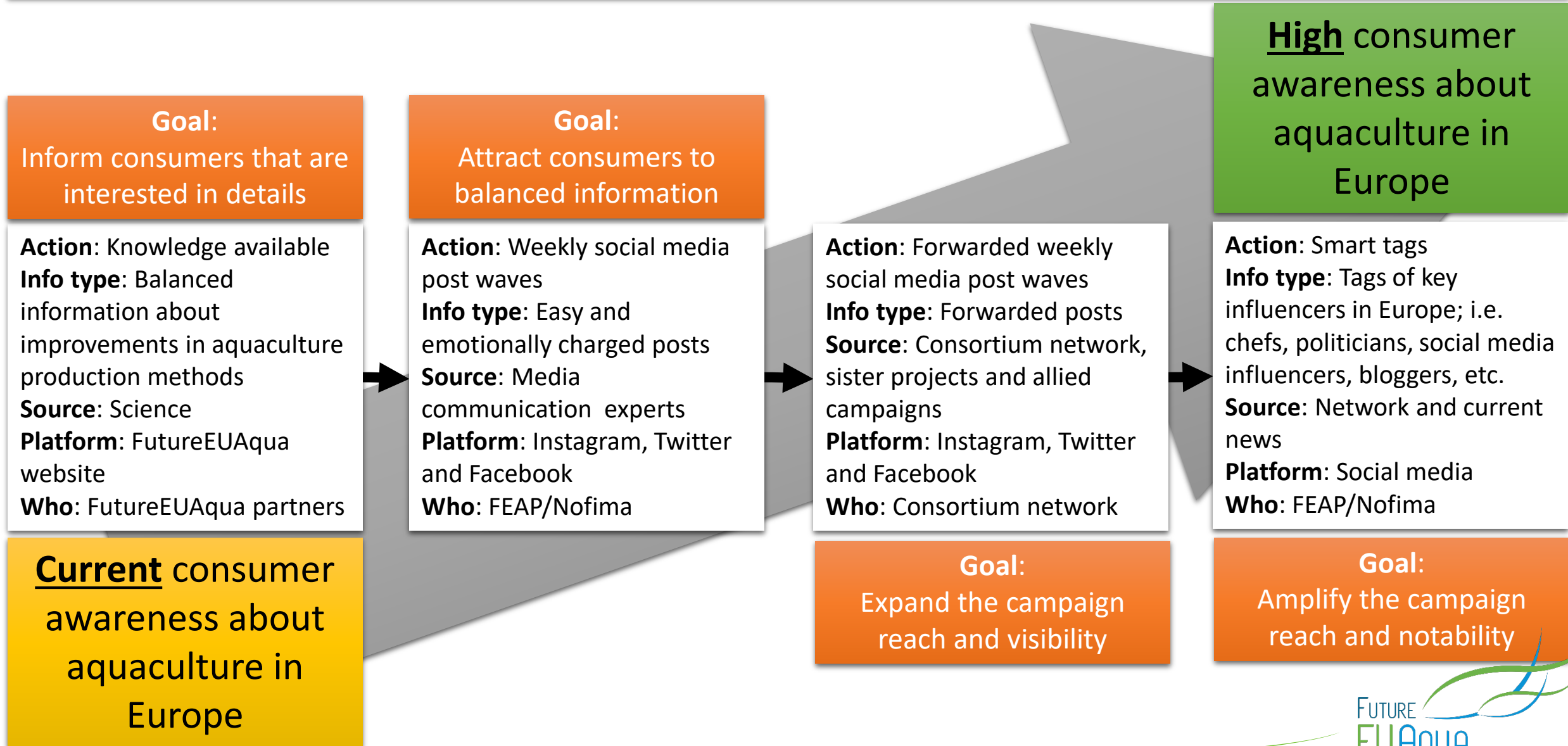
Recommendations

Action plan for a communication strategy:

- ❑ Detailed **plan** of specific social media posts developed in accordance with increasing awareness of aquaculture in Europe.
- ❑ FEAP → **dissemination**: reports, infographics, videos and pictures → attract the attention of consumers
- ❑ FEAP/Nofima's media communication experts → **content** of social media posts
- ❑ **Sources** → literature, recent and current communication campaigns and the FutureEUAqua surveys and experiments
- ❑ Communication **material**: start with broad focus on aquaculture → focus specifically on current and relevant information → production methods, environmental effects, benefits and challenges.



Communication strategy for increased consumer awareness about aquaculture in Europe



Glossary

- **Conventional aquaculture:** Aquaculture is the farming of fish, crustaceans, molluscs, aquatic plants, algae, and other organisms. Aquaculture involves cultivating freshwater and saltwater populations under controlled conditions in flow-through systems, ponds, net cages and longlines, and can be contrasted with commercial fishing, which is the harvesting of wild fish.
- **Integrated Multitrophic Aquaculture (IMTA):** Integrated aquaculture provides the by-products (e.g. waste from one aquatic species) as the input (e.g. fertilizer or food) for another species.
- **Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS):** Aquaculture production system on land, that allows for full control of production, that re-uses water and therefore needs water treatment units to remove accumulated waste.
- **Organic Aquaculture:** Organic production essentially means maintaining control of production, no use of synthetic drugs or pesticides, and strict regulation of production conditions and water quality. An organic fish is also considered a domesticated animal and is not the same as a wild fish

Linkography



Sustainable Aquaculture

This animation is an explainer on the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) which is a world leader in marine science and technology, providing innovative solutions for the aquatic environment, biodiversity and food security.



NewTechAqua - Sustainable, Resilient and Innovative European Aquaculture practices

Expansion and Diversification of Europe's aquaculture is vital for Europe's food security! Did you know that Europeans consume about 13 million tonnes of seafood each year, but that less than 30 percent comes from the EU, the rest being imported?

References

Alexander, K.A., Angel, D., Freeman, S., Israel, D., Johansen, J., Kletou, D., Meland, M., Pecorino, D., Rebours, C., Rousou, M. & Shorten, M., 2016. Improving sustainability of aquaculture in Europe: stakeholder dialogues on Integrated Multi-trophic Aquaculture (IMTA). Environmental Science & Policy, 55, pp.96-106.

Alexander, K.A., Freeman, S. & Angel, D.L., 2018. Public attitudes and decision making in environmental resource planning—a perception gap. Environmental Science & Policy, 80, pp.38-43.

Alexander, K.A., Freeman, S. & Potts, T., 2016. Navigating uncertain waters: European public perceptions of integrated multi trophic aquaculture (IMTA). Environmental Science & Policy, 61, pp.230-237.

[...Full list LINK](#)

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Enjoy the module!



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